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Resources for Neighborhood Network

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Operator: Good afternoon. My name is Sala and I will be your conference facilitator today. At this time, I would like to welcome everyone to the HUD Helps conference call. All lines have been placed on mute to prevent any background noise. After the speakers' remarks, there will be a question and answer period. If you would like to ask a question during this time, simply press star then the number one on your telephone keypad. If you would like to withdraw your question press the pound key. Thank you. Ms. Thomas, you may begin your conference.

Michelle: Thank you, Sala. Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to the October technical assistance conference call HUD Helps: Resources to Support and Sustain Neighborhood Network Centers. My name is Michelle Thomas and I'm the project director with the technical assistance contractor for neighborhood network.

Thank you for joining us this afternoon and we hope that by the end of this call you will understand and be able to take advantage of the many resources that HUD has made available to assist you in supporting and sustaining your center.

As most of you are aware, we're at the beginning of the new fiscal year. The federal fiscal year runs from October 1 to September 30 and we're ramping up to deliver some exciting services for you in this new year. Before we talk about the new services, however, I wanted to take a moment just to share some highlights from the fiscal year that ended September 30, 2003.

Last year neighborhood networks exhibited at ten technology, federal and community based conferences spreading the word about some of the tremendous things that you all are doing at your centers. As a result of some of the contacts made at those events ten national partnerships were developed and piloted at centers across the country. Steve McLaine, our partnerships manager will provide details about those partnerships in a few moments.

Additionally we had the opportunity to provide direct service on-site to several centers last year meeting all the center stakeholders, conducting local partnership meetings and developing strategic plans that are guiding centers across the country towards long-term sustainability. Sharon Glenn, our technical assistance manager will share more details about those efforts and how you

can benefit from technical assistance this year.

Our communications team has been busy over the past year as well, writing success stories and newsletter articles about some of the ways in which neighborhood network centers across the country are impacting their local and regional communities and providing you with fact sheets and technical assistance guides to provide ideas for ways in which you can increase your programs and services offered to your local community.

Carolee Gearheart ,our communications manager, will talk to you about some of the products and services that are available to you through our communications team this year. I'm sure that there were many of you, we hope, on this call that were also on our August conference call where we relaunched the new and improved start tool, the online business planning tool. We have been available to provide technical assistance to you. We hope that you have been calling in to receive your start workbooks and we are – we've been working with several centers across the country in developing and updating their business plans using the start tools.

Sylvia Benavides, our business plan coordinator, will talk to you about some of the program developments and business plan development services that are available for you.

Two hundred neighborhood network centers sponsored activities during neighborhoods week in 2003. And we've already begun planning our scheduled for 2004. We expect even greater participation this year and hope that as you are doing your annual planning for your neighborhood network center that you will include activities for neighborhood networks week 2004.

In addition we're pleased to let you all know today that there will be additional training and technical assistance workshops that will be provided to you this fiscal year. And Kristen Stevenson, our special projects manager, will talk to you about the different special events and training opportunities that are available for you this year.

Many of you have called the toll free information center at 888-

312-2743. We have technical assistance specialists available from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Eastern Time Monday through Friday and voice mail for after hours. Our staff can assist you with a variety of matters from publication requests and requests for media outreach assistance to more in-depth strategic planning and partnership development needs. We're here to help.

I'm going to turn the call over now to some of the members of our team who will provide you with more detailed information about the services that are currently available to you. We'll start with our partnerships manager Steven McLaine.

Steve:

Thanks, Michelle. As Michelle discussed, we are tasked with developing national and local partnerships and strengthening neighborhood network centers. And I will discuss the national partnerships with some of the success that we've had in the past year in terms of identifying and working with organizations that will bring services on site to the centers. We'll also talk about local partnerships a bit later when Sharon Glenn discusses the TA process.

One of the partners that we've worked with for the past year is the Department of Labor and we have linked with the Department of Labor to organize our neighborhood network centers in relation to the one-stop centers that the Department of Labor provides. One-stops are local workforce development centers that provide employment information and training. We're now working to get the word out to all of the one-stops about the Neighborhood Network program and we have already established several partnerships, including states such as South Dakota, Missouri, San Antonio, Texas, Nebraska, and North Carolina.

Now the one-stop staff in these areas is traveling on-site to the Neighborhood Network centers and providing job readiness classes, career planning and training, and also conducting Internet job search technique classes. The Department of Labor is also working to develop a website that will map out the locations of all neighborhood network centers and all local one-stops so that you will be able to identify the one-stop center closest to you.

Now, I should have said earlier that all of these partnerships that I

will be mentioning still have opportunities for pilots to be created in terms of having other centers to participate in these partnerships. So partnerships themselves are only as strong as the Neighborhood Network centers that contribute. So if you are interested or you do have a center that would be willing to participate in some of the partnerships that I am offering, again, the number is 888-312-2743 or you can contact me directly at 301-519-5193.

Now, in addition to working with the Department of Labor, we have also developed programs with the American Association for Community Colleges in an effort to link neighborhood network centers to community colleges across the country. And we've already established programs again in Nebraska, Illinois, North Carolina, and these programs run the gamut based upon the interest of the residents there. So some of the community colleges have provided employment skills training, others have worked to develop youth programming and links to the trio programming across the country. And one community college has also provided access to healthcare and healthcare prevention sessions are held on site at the center based upon the needs of the residents.

We've also continued to develop our relationship with NASA. Hopefully some of you have participated in some of the NASA webcasts that we often advertise during the course of the year. We're working to expand that relationship and to have NASA individuals, known as solar system ambassadors, to actually travel on-site to your centers and conduct "imagine Mars" community-building programs. NASA's very excited about the participation our Neighborhood Networks have assumed thus far and we'd like to continue to develop that program across the country.

We're also working with an organization called Operation Hope, which is an economic self-sufficiency organization that was created in the aftermath of the Los Angeles riots some time ago. You may have seen the director of Operation Hope, Mr. John Bryant, on the Oprah Winfrey show. We do not have a partnership with Oprah Winfrey yet but we are working on that. But Operation Hope is designed to encourage self-sufficiency through economic means based on career training and also financial literacy. They are now operating in Los Angeles, California and will be opening a new center in Washington, D.C. and those

centers will be providing onsite seminars and financial counseling at local centers in those areas.

In addition, Operation Hope will be donating free economic education software to each of the onsite TA centers that we will visit during the upcoming year and Sharon Glenn, again, will expand on the on-site TA process.

We're also working with the Future Investors Club of American, which is a financial intelligence training company that provides onsite business and career training to young residence. During this past summer, the CEO of the organization traveled to several centers including Fort Worth, Texas, Chicago, Illinois, and Pasadena, California. He conducting training sessions for 25 residents at two centers in Baltimore, Maryland and also conducted a training session in Alabama at the Birmingham HUD office with the able assistance of the NN coordinator, Sarah Richie Johnson.

We were able to provide a training session for staff from seven Neighborhood Networks centers and 20 residents ranging in ages from 8 to 19. And they were trained on budgeting and career choices that will enable them to pursue the American dream.

Alabama was so excited about the program that they are expanding the program into the consortium and we're working to develop that now. We're also working to develop an expansion in the Maryland area and Mr. Parks is more than willing to work with other centers in other areas. So please let us know if you're interested in that particular program.

We're working with two organizations that provide online training and Internet courses. One is called Tech Foundation, which his providing services to centers in the Alabama area. The other is Cyber Learning, which provides training in information technology, management, and test preparation skills. And they're providing free licenses to a number of centers in areas such as Virginia, Wisconsin, and Florida. These courses have a value of about \$2,000 and they're being provided free on a one-year basis. And so it's an excellent opportunity to increase training and certification opportunities. Cyber Learning, in fact, will provide certification upon the completion of various courses and will even

provide a certificate that will allow individuals to improve their career choices as they move on to bigger and better things.

You may have recalled a particular partnership that we announced during Neighborhood Networks week last year, which is with an organization that's called STRIVE and they are a workforce development agency that provides career training and career advancement and also career counseling. The partnership was started or initiated at the Kraus Computer Learning Center in Brooklyn, New York and we are looking to expand that partnership into various areas in Connecticut, Boston, Massachusetts, Chicago, and Seattle, Washington. Pilot centers – potential pilot centers in those areas might be interested in working with the STRIVE facilities that are located there. And again, the number for that is 888-312-2743.

We're also working with Bank of America through their America works program. They are traveling on-site to Neighborhood Networks centers and offering financial literacy training on basic budgeting, checking and savings accounts, banking, and home ownership. There are currently pilots in Dallas, Texas and Charlotte, North Carolina. The Charlotte, North Carolina pilot has been particularly effective. We have several residents that are enrolled in a credit repair class and one particular resident that was enrolled in a home buyers class, which will provide her with funds towards the purchase of her home once she completes the class. Bank of America has been very excited about working with us and is also eager to expand in terms of working with additional centers across the country.

We've worked with Kids Online. Hopefully some of you are participating with some of the webcasts and seminars that they have offered and that we have advertised on our website. Kids Online also broadcast the open ceremony for the NN week program last year and you may not have realized, but actual residents from that particular center, Edward Tarrington, Washington, D.C., were involved in the filming and broadcast of the event. So they were behind the camera, behind the scenes and they really took a lot out of that organization and we're excited to work with them. Kids Online is eager to provide this service again to other centers. They're opening a new studio in the Los Angeles

area and are interested in working with centers in California. So we're working to provide that service to other centers in the area.

And last but not least is the Department of Education. They're providing financial aid information and we are working to provide that to each and every center so that you can provide these resources to your residence for youth and adults, anyone interested in pursuing education or career training. In addition they will be providing financial aid workshops at the upcoming RTAW, which will be also be discussed a little bit later. And well be providing particular tool kits to the onsite TA centers that we'll be working with this year. So we're definitely working to make sure that these partnerships are not just established but actually reach onsite through your centers and provide services to the residents that need them.

That's a listing of the national partnerships. We've also developed a number of local partnerships, which are much more particularly suited to your residents needs based upon what they indicate to you as a staff. And Sharon Glenn will discuss more about that as she talks about the TA process.

Sharon:

Thank you, Steve. Good afternoon, everyone. Well, the technical assistance staff is certainly excited about the upcoming year. If I must say, last year was very fast paced and yet exciting. Nearly 100 centers received remote technical assistance and we had the privilege of providing onsite assistance to another 30 centers located throughout the US. Both remote and onsite centers were given the opportunity to work in areas of partnership development, employment, job training, 501(C)3 applications, outreach to stakeholders and residents, tracking and evaluation and last, but certainly not least, business plan development or update using the enhanced online business plan better known as START.

Some of the outcomes of the technical assistance were partnership opportunities where we worked in collaboration with our partnership teams to develop local, one-stop career center partnerships and partnerships with community colleges.

Center staff was able to develop and customize marketing plans that involved grand reopenings, development of newsletters and

innovative teams to help increase resident and community awareness. We also had centers that developed boards of directors and articles of incorporation to begin the 501(C)3 tax-exempt filing process. But what I think to be the most heartfelt outcome was that center stakeholders realized that they were not alone when it comes to helping residents achieve self-sufficiency. They had the privilege of seeing HUD's commitment up close and personal for three and in some cases four days.

Now that as just a brief description of TA activities that were performed during fiscal year 2003. If anyone is interested, you're welcome to contact our toll free line at 888-312-2732 for a more detailed description of the TA that was provided.

For fiscal year 2004 our enthusiasm continues as we build upon last year's activities. In the next couple of minutes I will go over the features for the upcoming year. I will share with you ways for you to nominate and request technical assistance for your centers. We will start with a feature that is being revamped from the previous years in a continuing effort to provide valuable assistance to HUD staff: technical assistance specialists will share information on a monthly basis with HUD NN Coordinators regarding the creation of new Neighborhood Networks centers and maintenance and operations of existing centers. We want to be the coordinators eyes and ears in regards to Neighborhood Networks.

A new feature that we're excited about that we'd like to extend to HUD staff is the hosting of forums. The purpose of the forums is to help HUD coordinators promote Neighborhood Networks centers to property managers and potential partners. The half-day forums will be hosted in conjunction with onsite visits. HUD will provide all logistical and material support including conducting out- reach and facilitating or in some cases co-facilitating the events. We will provide further details at a later date. So, please look forward to a forum to be conducted in or around your city and participate, if possible, because I'm sure that the information that will be provided at the forums will be beneficial.

As stated earlier, TA staff provided assistance in seven different categories that will help centers become more sustainable. This year, HUD is adding two additional categories and they are health

resources and micro-enterprise development. Also, during the upcoming year the 30 centers that received onsite technical assistance will see our bright and shining faces once again on the follow-up visit. The follow-up visits will last for two days and will continue to help the centers move toward achieving model status. In addition to providing onsite assistance to the centers from last year, HUD will extend assistance to another 20 centers and those visits will have a three-day duration. We invite HUD coordinators and property owners to nominate centers that could benefit from technical assistance in any of the nine categories.

Once again, those categories are partnership development, employment job training, 501(C)3 applications, outreach to stakeholders, tracking and evaluation, outreach to residents, business plan development, health resources, and micro-enterprise development. You may call our toll free information line at 888-312-2743 to make the request. A technical assistance specialist will be on hand and will send a request form to you via e-mail or fax for your completion. Once the request is received, our staff will begin assessing the centers' needs and challenges and that would determine the best plan of action in helping the center become more sustainable.

Contact will be made with NN coordinators property owners, and managers and, of course, center staff to determine their vision for the centers. Asset mapping will be performed. Also, to determine what local businesses and organizations in your areas would serve as great partners for the centers.

With both onsite and remote centers we look forward to working with our communications team and sharing the success of TA and your progress to the rest of the Neighborhood Networks world in the form of success stories. So we really look forward to doing some great work out there.

So, that is my portion of TA. We will now hear from Silvia Benavides as she shares with us technical assistance part two. I invite any and all questions during the question and answer segment of this call. Thank you.

Silvia:

Thank you, Sharon. Good afternoon. As Michelle and Sharon

mentioned, I will be providing an overview of the technical assistance that is available through the Neighborhood Networks information center, which is conducted remotely. Michelle mentioned Start, the online business plan, which was enhanced last year and it has new features that will enable centers to create their business plans online. And it's really – has helped so far many centers that have started using it. Some of the centers already completed an online business plan and have submitted it to the HUD coordinator for review and approval.

The Neighborhood Networks information center is available to answer any questions you may have regarding Start. You can also request a Start workbook through the information center by calling 888-312-2743.

Another resource that we providing is conference calls. These conference calls are hosted monthly to discuss relevant topics for the successful operation of Neighborhood Networks centers. In addition, an audio version of the conference call discussions and conference call transcripts will be available, free of charge, on the Neighborhood Networks website at neighborhoodnetworks.org shortly after the call.

Some of the topics that are coming up during this fiscal year include creating afterschool programs, micro-enterprise development, increasing resident participation, designing a youth employment program and so forth.

During last year's conference call, we had over 300 individuals participating in the discussions. The participants were NN centers, property managers, prep staff, and non-profit organizations. Summaries of these calls are available to anyone interested by calling 888-312-2743.

As well as requesting any technical assistance resources, we have guides, newsletters, and fact sheets that will help staff make their center sustainable. We also have funding opportunities that are posted on the website weekly and those updates are regarding funding available to Neighborhood Networks centers. And also any partnership opportunities available for centers to take advantage of those funding opportunities on the website also are

sent via fax or e-mail and via regular mail as well. The funding opportunities are national or regional original in scope. And if you have any questions, you can always use the 1-800 number to call a TA specialists.

And now this is my part. I give you Carolee Gearhart.

Carolee:

Thanks, Silvia. Having the right information when you need it may determine whether your center can sustain itself. Information tools are important keys so we provide marketing support and several types of publications to help centers get organized and remain active. All of our publications are available on the Neighborhood Networks website. When you get to the home page, just click on publications at the bottom of the page or there is, on the menu bar to the left, a title called resources for centers. Either place you can get to the publication section. One type of publication we put on the website every week are success stories and these are story profiles that talk about the success that one center or another is having with program development or with openings, things like that.

We also produce fact sheets. These are two-page information flyers that give overviews on a variety of topics such as the reason that you would even want to start a Neighborhood Networks center and how managers and owners can benefit from having a center.

We also published two newsletters every year and four issues of those newsletters. NNewsline is a newsletter that provides information for the centers themselves and Network News provides information of interest to managers and owners. Two issues of each of these newsletters are on the website today and another two issues will be uploaded next Tuesday afternoon. From then on they'll appear quarterly.

There are also handbooks on the Neighborhood Networks website and these are a bit more technical and they'll help guide you through a more complicated process. There's a Start workbook there and it's new this year. We also have technical assistance guides, several of them, and they give detailed information on a topic such as job readiness, curriculum, solutions to transportation problems, models for child care services and a media relations

guide to help you promote your centers activities.

As I said, we also provide marketing support for grand openings. We lend banners to centers that are celebrating their grand opening. All you need to do is call or e-mail us, ask for banner and we'll send one along with a self-addressed label so you can send it back free of charge after your opening's over.

We'll also send information packets. These are folders that contain fact sheets, a map showing the number of centers in each state, the Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico, and a list of operating centers. We'll also provide you with a list of contact information for publications, media, and broadcast media in your area. That way you can use the list to call the radio and television stations or newspaper publishers and ask them to run free public service announcements about your opening.

We also conducted a survey of Neighborhood Network centers this year and that survey resulted in a directory and a report profiling 330 centers. The directory lists all the centers that are registered with us and gives contact information along with list of consortia and also HUD coordinator stuff.

The report and the directory will be forthcoming this winter and next year we hope to conduct another survey and we hope that even more people will get the opportunity to participate. We have lots of exciting things coming up this year and Kristen will now tell you about some of the special projects.

Kristen:

Thanks Carolee. As Michelle mentioned, I am working here at Neighborhood Networks on special projects and what the special project staff do is we help coordinate and create some of the national events that are held to help rally support, interest, awareness, and information for and about Neighborhood Networks centers.

The events we're working on consists of the upcoming HUD staff training, the three regional technical assistance workshops that we refer to as the RTAWs, Neighborhood Networks Week and the tenth anniversary national training conference that will be held in 2005.

The HUD staff training will proceed the first RTAW. The HUD staff training is a forum that allows HUD staff to get together and exchange information and learn from one another on a variety of topics that are relevant to their neighborhood network duties.

The next event we're planning for are the three regional technical assistance workshops. These workshops will be held in March and April of 2004 in three locations in different regions of the country. The exact dates and locations are forthcoming and will be shared as soon as the information becomes available. These interactive workshops allow participants to gather and learn from informative presenters on a variety of new and exciting topics that will help you whether you're a center director, a HUD coordinator, a partner, a property owner or any other stakeholder.

In June 2003 we'll also be celebrating Neighborhood Networks week. As you all know Neighborhood Network week is a week-long celebration of your center, your residents, your partners, everything that makes up your center. We're already in the planning stages for this exciting event and we're especially excited for the upcoming Neighborhood Networks week because it's going to be the kick off and the count down for the event of the tenth anniversary national training conference, like I said, that will be held in June 2005.

We will have the poster contest, webcasts, and other new neighborhood network week events that we will want your center your participate in, so please make sure you check the website regularly for information and for updates.

And as I mentioned, the tenth anniversary national training conference planning has already begun. The conference will be held in 2005 and we have a lot of ideas and plans to make this event one that you won't want to miss. So again, make sure you check our website and as we get more information we will make sure and share it in all of the upcoming conference calls and like I said, our website will be your best reference for that.

If I can be of any other assistance to you or you'd like any further information on any of these events, please don't hesitate to contact

me and say the toll free number just one more time. It's 888-312-2743. And I'm going to turn it back to Michelle now.

Michelle:

Thank you, Kristen. Well, we hope that you're excited because we certainly are. We've got a lot of interesting and fun activities that we are planning for this year, but most importantly we are working very hard to bring resources to your local neighborhood network centers that can help you to maintain and grow the programs and services that you offer for residents in your local communities. We want to remind you that if you're interested in being considered for one of the pilot projects that Steve McLaine spoke about, please feel free to call us at our toll free information line 888-312-2743.

Additionally, if you are interested in getting onsite technical assistance for your Neighborhood Networks center or if your staff doesn't have the capacity to host a three-day site visit but you are interested in having some assistance with strategic planning and partnership development and resource development, you can request remote technical assistance where our staff will work with you on the on the telephone and via e-mail to develop an action plan and help to implement and bring additional resources to your center as well. So if you're interested in remote technical assistance or onsite technical assistance again, the number is 888-312-2743.

If you have had your business plans, if your center has been open for seven or eight years and you've not updated your business plan recently, we are here to help you to do that. The enhancements – part of the enhancements with the new and enhanced Start tool is that not only is it a kind of a one time business plan development tool, but there are also ongoing assessment tools that are available with the Start tool as well. So if you've been around for a while and you haven't updated your business plan in a while, if you use the Start tool and update your information annually or every three years or however often, you can go back into the Start tool and put in current information and compare it against the current – you can put in information that is current at that moment and compare it against information that you put in previously about your center and track the changes that are taking place in your center, the growth and the new opportunities that have been made available to

your center over the years.

So the Start tool is not just a one-time business-planning tool, but it now has an assessment feature that will allow you go in periodically and update your centers information and track changes over time. If you need assistance with using the Start tool, with inputting your information, with understanding all the new features that are available, and how you can use Start to help manage your center programs and operations, feel free to call us on our toll free information line at 888-312-2743.

Our communications team is here to help us. There are some fabulous things that are going on at your center that you want the world to know about, so feel free to e-mail us. Go on to the Neighborhood Networks website at neighborhoodnetwork.org or you can call us on the toll free information line and let us know what your center is doing and maybe our staff can write up a success story so that all the centers and all of our partners and supporters can know what's going on in your center, in your local community, and the way in which you're delivering technology access to your local community. Our communications team is here to help you also with media outreach for your special events. We can provide you with banners and information packets that tell your potential partners and your larger community about the neighborhood networks initiative. We are here to help and if you need assistance in that area feel free to call us or e-mail us.

And we hope that you will be making your plans to attend one of the three regional technical assistance workshops that are going to be held in the west, the southwest and the south during March and April of 2004. We are really excited as we are finalizing the dates and locations for those sites and we anticipate that before the holiday season we will be sending out information to you letting you know the exact wheres and whens so that you can mark your calendars and plan to attend one of the three regional technical assistance workshops.

It's an outstanding opportunity for you to network with other Neighborhood Networks centers and for you to be provided with hands on technical assistance and training in different areas that could assist you with the operations and planning for your

neighborhood network center. Again, that's March and April. There will be three regional technical assistance workshops and we hope that we'll see you there.

In addition, in late June of 2004 we'll be hosting our annual Neighborhood Networks week and we've got lots of exciting things. A couple of new twists that we're planning in terms of activities for Neighborhood Networks Week 2004 and we hope that as you're doing your annual planning that you will mark your calendars and make it your plan to participate in the neighborhood network week activities.

All of this, much of this, is leading towards the tenth anniversary of Neighborhood Networks. And as Kristen stated in June of 2005, we will be hosting the tenth anniversary national training conference for Neighborhood Networks. We've got so many wonderful events that are planned. We hope that you will, you know, as you're doing your planning budget that you're working with your property owners and planning for the future of your Neighborhood Networks center. We want you to mark your calendar and make a place in your budget to participate and attend the 2005 tenth anniversary national training conference for Neighborhood Networks.

We're going to open up the floor now – the phone lines now - for questions and answers and we'll help you in any way we can to answer any questions that you might have about the services that HUD has provided for you and your Neighborhood Networks center.

Operator: At this time, I would like to remind everyone in order to ask a question, please press star then the number one on your telephone keypad. We'll pause for just a moment to compile the Q&A roster. Your first question comes from Vanessa Rice.

Vanessa: Yes. I'm calling – I'm asking about – I heard you say that you will provide banners for grand opening events that we had.

Michelle: Yes, we do.

Vanessa: I was wondering about – I used to be able to get banners from local

business. Now they've gotten to where they charge fees for that. Do you have any ideas of how we could work it out with some of the business as to how we could obtain banners for just local events?

Michelle: You want to have banners for events at your Neighborhood Networks center.

Vanessa: Correct.

Michelle: And typically when you've worked with local businesses what types of banners do they provide? Do they have the name of your center on it, or do they have information about the center or was it an advertisement for that particular local business?

Vanessa: Primarily, it was from bottling companies in the area. And they would put their bottling, you know, it would have their logo on there, but put whatever the name of the event was that we were having. And I was just wondering if anyone had any ideas on how we could work it out with these businesses to get them, you know, to encourage them to provide that service free again.

Michelle: Well, the banners just kind of – for your information, the banners that the neighborhood network banners that are available for the centers are for various types of special events, not only the grand opening. So if when you're having major special events at your center, if you want a neighborhood network banner, just call us on the toll free line and we can send you out a Neighborhood Networks banner and ask that you send it back when the event is done. But we can provide those Neighborhood Networks banners for you.

Vanessa: Okay. All right. Thanks.

Michelle: You're welcome, Vanessa.

Operator: Your next question comes from Yvonne Harris.

Yvonne: Hi. I'm the Neighborhood Networks coordinator in the Buffalo office. I have two questions. Well, one I would like to make a recommendation to the lady that was just on about her banners.

What she might consider doing is to negotiate with the company that is providing the banners because what she's doing is by the nature of putting their banners up with their logo and their business name on it, she's providing them with a service. So she needs to sit and do some negotiating with them of a win/win situation and helping you as you're helping me and do it in a very, you know, positive cordial way so that it won't discourage them, but yet still bring them.

The other thing, will we be provided with a list of the participants? Because I'd like to know how many of my centers are participating in this workshop.

Michelle: In the conference call today?

Yvonne: Yes.

Michelle: We can definitely send you tomorrow, excuse me, we can send you a list of participants in today's call.

Yvonne: Okay. Okay. Thank you.

Michelle: You're welcome. Thank you.

Operator: Your next question comes from Anesta Walker.

Anesta: Yes. Good afternoon. I'm the new coordinator at one of the network centers and our lovely project coordinator told me of a book, Welcome to the Neighborhood. It was written in 1999 and I was wondering is that still in – can I still purchase it, I mean, get a copy of it or has it been updated and it's now another title? But it was a training book with lots of information and it was called, Welcome to the Neighborhood and it was written in 1999.

Michelle: Right. That is actually a technical assistance resource guide –

Anesta: Right.

Michelle: -- that has been updated since then. And Ms. Walker, if you call the toll free information line.

Anesta: Yes.

Michelle: Give us your mailing address and your center information.

Anesta: Okay.

Michelle: And put that in the mail to you today.

Anesta: Okay. And what is – is it still called Welcome to the Neighborhood or is it --

Michelle: It's called the Neighborhood Networks Resource Guide.

Anesta: Okay. Thank you so much.

Michelle: Thank you.

Operator: Your next question comes from Darrell Williams.

Darrell: Hi. I'm a service coordinator at a senior citizen and handicap residential building and my question is we have a lot of seniors in our building. However, our attendance in the Neighborhood Networks center is extremely low. And I was wondering if you have any ideas that we can incorporate in our Neighborhood Networks center that might peak the interest of senior citizens and handicap persons.

Michelle: Where are your – where is your center located?

Darrell: We're located in Cleveland, Ohio inner city.

Michelle: There are several organizations that – I'm not sure if they have Cleveland affiliates, but there are several organizations that develop content and programs specifically for seniors that kind of get them interested in technology. One of them is called Generations Online, I think. That is a Virginia-based organization, but they have a website where you can download information about programs for seniors.

Often local chapters of AARP will provide volunteers and other kinds of assistance to help develop programs for seniors and

there's another technology-based senior program called Senior Net. They, too, have a website that I think is seniornet.org that has ideas and activities – ideas to get seniors interested in technology.

What we've generally found is that the things that seniors use the Internet most for are healthcare research, you know, researching information about their medications and about different treatment options for different illness that affect them and e-mail. They love e-mailing their grand kids. They love e-mailing their kids and it gives them an opportunity to connect with a community that's much larger than their own and in many ways, we have found, reconnect with their families.

And so, you know, sometimes what some approach – an approach that some senior centers have tried is sponsoring programs that are not technology related to get seniors into the center and once you get them in there, slowly expose them to the technology. So if you have very social events in your center that seniors might be interested in coming into participating in. Once you get them in, you know, 15 or 20 minutes of the two hours that they're there introduce them to the technology and show them some of the things that can happen, help them set up an e-mail account and send an e-mail to their grand kids. And once they get that first e-mail back from their grand kids then they're hooked.

So there a lot of different approaches that you can take, but generally things that focus on connecting them with their families and/or helping them with healthcare issues are generally the ones for which there's the greatest participation.

Darrell: Okay. Thank you very much.

Michelle: Thank you, Mr. Williams.

Operator: Your next question comes from Marla Roy.

Marla: Hi.

Michelle: Hi.

Marla: I'm wondering if I share all of the information about the national

partnerships and the local partnerships that the Neighborhood Networks office has developed with all of these other organizations and I'm wondering what kind of work is the Neighborhood Networks organization doing with the management company of the properties that we're working on.

Michelle: It varies from center to center. With some of the larger property management companies that have multiple centers across the country, we've been working with some of them, particularly with Aimco, which is the one that we've been working with the most, to develop strategy for strengthening centers and working with them to try to help open up new centers across the country. For all of the centers for whom we've provided onsite and/or remote technical assistance, we have conducted outreach to the property owners and management agents of those properties that house the centers that we're working closely with and engage them in strategic visioning and providing strategic direction for the Neighborhood Networks center and in many cases we've been able to work with the center and with the property owners and management agents to identify and secure additional resources that can support both staff and programs and activities at the Neighborhood Networks centers.

If you're a property owner or a management agent and you would like for us to assist you, please feel free to call us or if you're a center needing technical assistance and wanting some kind of help to bridge the gap or kind of reach out more to your property owner or to your management company we can help you with that through the technical assistance process as well.

Marla: Okay.

Michelle: Does that answer your question, Ms. Roy?

Operator: Your next question comes from Laura Orenda.

Laura: Hi. Good afternoon.

Michelle: Good afternoon.

Laura: I just have a question for you. Who can we contact to get a list of

operating centers in our country and [UNINTELLIGIBLE] in the area?

Michelle: A list of operating centers in the country and what was the second part of the question?

Laura: Yes. And then the media resources in the area.

Michelle: Okay. With the list of Neighborhood Networks centers you can call the toll free information line 888-312-2743. We can send you out a list of the centers, but it's also on the Neighborhood Networks website at www.neighborhoodnetworks.org. And if you go to the Neighborhood Networks website in the left hand column there's a line that says, find a center and if you click on that and click on the next page there it takes you to a map where you can click on the state if you're looking for a specific center in your state. You can search it by state. If you would like for us, though, to send you a printed list of all the neighborhood network centers we can do that by calling the information.

In terms of getting assistance with media outreach –

Laura: Yes.

Michelle: -- if you call our information center and tell the technical assistance specialist that answers the phone that you would like assistance with media outreach you'll be connected with our communications staff that can help to put together a media list with local media outlets including print broadcast – print and broadcast media in your local community along with contact information for them. We can also send you the sample press releases and sample media kits that can help you to get the word out about your neighborhood network center in your local community.

Laura: Okay. Well, thank you very much.

Michelle: You're welcome.

Operator: Your next question comes from Frank Finner.

Patricia: It's not Frank Finner, but it is Patricia instead of. I am from

Richmond, California and we are a new firm – new establishment here in Richmond, California, new employee that is trying to establish the need for our community. I wanted to know if there was a contact person locally in Richmond, California that we can speak with.

Michelle: If I'm not mistaken, Richmond, California is in the Bay Area.

Patricia: That is correct.

Michelle: Okay. And you'd probably be working with Unetha Norman. No, I'm sorry. Diana Mann in the San Francisco HUD field office.

Patricia: Oh, I'm familiar with her. She's at 350 Golden Gate in San Francisco.

Michelle: I'm sorry...

Patricia: Is she located at 350 Golden Gate in San Francisco?

Michelle: I think that's right. We're checking the address on that. Yes, that's correct.

Patricia: Oh, okay.

Michelle: Diana can help you with that and, I mean, we can also. We have technical assistance tools that can help you to assess your residents' needs. And our technical assistance specialist can provide those tools for you and help you customize a resident assessment tool that will be specific to kind of the demographics and the – what you anticipate to be the needs of your local community. So you can also call us through the toll free information line and our TA specialist can help you with that as well.

Patricia: Okay. The other question is I wanted to thank the caller that he referenced our seniors. We're multi-family so we not only have the seniors available here, but we have multi-family and it's [UNINTELLIGIBLE] housing. And we wanted to also – we have the YMCA that is actually onsite, but I do think that there is a program that [UNINTELLIGIBLE] and I also wanted to address

the specific needs as it relates to children and seniors combo. Because I do feel like there's a need for the combination for them to network together.

Michelle: Definitely. Inter-generational programs are often a little more challenging to pull off, but are extremely rewarding when centers are able to do it. And some of our centers have programs where the seniors come in and they read stories and provide homework assistance to the younger youth in the Neighborhood Networks centers. There is one Neighborhood Networks center that had the youth engage in a community documentary project where they had the youth in the community put on a journalist pack and go from door to door and talk with the elders and the seniors in the community to get oral histories and to document the stories of that local community and then the children came back and created a booklet that outlined the history of that community based on the oral histories given to them by the seniors.

So, there are centers across the country that are doing some – taking very creative approaches to developing inter-generational learning. But it does generally take a little while to get those types of programs off the ground, but again, when you do get them off the ground they are quite rewarding.

Patricia: Okay. Well, thank you so much. As I said, we're just basically new. I think we all have been here less than four months.

Michelle: Oh, wow.

Patricia: We're trying to make a transition having a senior coordinator for services and also one other that takes care of the multi-families and then we have two assistant managers and myself and the managers to try to pull together a forum and of course a network that's going to work effectively on our particular properties.

Michelle: Patricia, what's the name of your center.

Patricia: It's the Barrett's Plaza.

Michelle: Oh, okay. You're one of the – you received onsite technical assistance this year.

Patricia: Yeah. We're open under open community housing management.

Michelle: Okay. Okay. Great. Well, yeah, we definitely have been working closely with your center and we'll continue to do so over the next year. So hopefully we can assist you with inter-generational programming if that is what you want. Hopefully we can identify some local partnerships that can help to make that happen in your center.

Patricia: Okay. Who have you actually been in contact with that relates to us?

Michelle: Michelle – I'm sorry.

Patricia: Fryer?

Michelle: Yes. Exactly. Michelle Fryer.

Patricia: Okay.

Michelle: Yeah. We actually did a three-day site visit at your center in late June of this year. The global education partnership that's currently taking place at your center, that's one of the partnerships that we helped to establish with the center this summer.

Patricia: Okay. All right. Thanks again for the info. It has been quite informative and we do appreciate all of your staff.

Michelle: Thank you and thank for participating.

Patricia: Okay.

Operator: Your next question comes from Pat Branson.

Pat: Hi. I'm a resident service coordinator, sorry, and we're just in the process of starting a Neighborhood Networks. And I have some questions. On an Aimco property in New Jersey. Before we have the 501(c)(3), can we send out letters asking for donations?

Michelle: Oh, certainly. I mean, the – you can certainly solicit financial and

in kind donations from organizations without being a 501C3. Generally it's a greater challenge though because it – the donor does not receive a tax benefit for providing resources to your center.

Pat: Okay. And do we have to partner in the beginning – I mean, because if we're sending out the information just to see who's going to support the center, I don't see how you can partner with someone in the beginning even to go for the 501. Is that something – do you do the 501 immediately?

Michelle: You don't have to. I would say that the typical model is that most centers don't immediately apply for 501C3, but they, you know, get the doors opening and get some of their programming established and then they apply for non-profit status. But it really does vary from property to property.

In terms of partnership development, the earlier that you're able to bring partners on the better because partners, you know, are an effective way to bring additional resources, to bring volunteers, to bring programs into your center without having to create things from scratch. And so if there's a local one stop in your area that's already proving work force development programs instead of necessarily creating new work force development programs in your center, you could partner with a local one stop in your center and have them to bring programs that they've already, you know –

Pat: Right. We're working in citizen mobility impaired buildings.

Michelle: Okay.

Pat: So we're more, you know, I guess health and e-mailing and things like that. So it's kind of going to be more social.

Michelle: Okay.

Pat: You know, maybe educational. So I'm just wondering in terms of partnering with maybe a county college or something. I don't know.

Michelle: Exactly. A lot of our centers – a tremendous number of

Neighborhood Networks centers partner with local community colleges. College students are a wonderful resource for providing volunteer support for your centers and helping to keep your programs going.

Pat: Okay. That sounds good. And would I – would we right away request technical assistance? Is that something I should do immediately?

Michelle: Once your center has submitted a business plan and it has been approved by your local HUD field office –

Pat: Okay.

Michelle: -- then we can provide technical assistance, but –

Pat: Okay. But not until then.

Michelle: Right.

Pat: Okay. Thank you very much.

Male Speaker: You also want to make sure that – and I'm sure that [UNINTELLIGIBLE] chief technical assistant is there will mention this, but you want to make sure that when pursuing partners and developing partnerships that your center is capable of participating in that partnership. You don't want to move too quickly in terms of reaching out to organizations that might expect something in return from you that your center is not quite yet ready to provide. So you have to sort of balance your needs in terms of the interest of the center and also what the residents needs are and make sure that it's a valuable partnership for the partner as well because you don't want to establish a poor reputation in terms of working with other organizations in the community.

Pat: Right.

Michelle: Thank you.

Pat: Thank you.

Operator: Call from Jason McLee.

Female Speaker: Hi.

Michelle: Hi.

Female Speaker: My name is [UNINTELLIGIBLE]. I'm a [UNINTELLIGIBLE] and I'm actually sitting here with the other three resident service coordinators for the AIMCO 100 point properties and we're actually getting ready in San Francisco and we're actually getting ready to open up our first computer learning center at our [UNINTELLIGIBLE]. Grand opening is tomorrow, Thursday at 11:00 and we're really excited about it and we're really, really excited and just appreciative of all their help and work and information you guys have been able to give us up until this point. What our question is is that now that we have an established neighborhood network center we want more information and kind of wanted to learn the procedures about solidifying training and curriculum for the workshop you're going to be doing as well as the staff are going to be running the centers.

Michelle: Well, we would certainly encourage you to make plans for your staff to attend the regional technical assistance workshops. There will be one in your region in the western area and that will take place in March of 2004. That really is the best place for training for Neighborhood Networks center staff. There are the technical assistance resource guides that we discussed earlier that can help to provide ideas and guidance in developing programs and your – you can definitely request technical assistance and we can help to develop partnerships and do program development kinds of strategic planning for your Neighborhood Networks center.

Female Speaker: Okay. So basically what that means is, I mean, there'll be hearing about this technical assistance training in March and those dates will be updated as we get closer. We can check the website for that information. Is that correct?

Michelle: That is correct and we will be sending out e-mails and mailings and we'll send out a "Save the Date" card before the holidays so that you'll know exactly the cities and the dates and we'll also be sending out e-mails and information will be provided on the

neighborhood networks website.

Female Speaker: Okay. I'm sorry. Last thing. And we have three other additional centers that are going to be opening over the process of the next approximate six months. And so we wanted to know just in going through the same steps that we've done for the first one is there anything that you can recommend that will make the process a little bit easier in regards to staying connected with you guys and establishing some of those partnerships and being a part of some of those pilot programs.

Michelle: For the centers that haven't opened yet or for your existing centers?

Female Speaker: Well, beginning with the center that's opening tomorrow and then for the other three that are coming.

Michelle: What are some of the challenges?

Female Speaker: I think some of the biggest challenges – well, actually [UNINTELLIGIBLE] speak to that.

Male Speaker: Hello. One of the main challenges that we're facing is right now providing training and curriculum development. Does Neighborhood Networks provide guides or instructors or anything like that to basically assist us getting classes together?

Michelle: Right. There are definitely guides. They're on the Neighborhood Networks website and we can send you hard copies that can help you with that. In terms of providing instructors, HUD does not provide the instructors itself, however, we can help you to identify local organizations within your community that would work with you to provide training on site at your center.

Female Speaker: Okay.

Male Speaker: And to obtain that information we would just call the 800 number.

Michelle: Exactly.

Male Speaker: Or the 888 number or just go through the website.

Michelle: You can all the toll free information line to request that information. I mean, you could do either one but if – we – either one.

Male Speaker: Okay.

Female Speaker: And I'm sorry. I made one last mistake. Our grand opening is actually happening on Thursday, October 30 so just keep us in your thoughts on that day.

Michelle: Certainly will.

Female Speaker: Thank you.

Michelle: Thank you.

Operator: Your next question comes from Katy Wheatley [PHONETIC].

Katy: Yes. I'm Katy Wheatley, the service coordinator at Clinton Township here in Michigan. I wanted to know more about that NASA program and how do I get that program to come here.

Male Speaker: It's a program designed by NASA to involve different communities in working with the NASA affiliates across the country. We're actually talking with them now in terms of finding the best way to provide it to different centers. But we have also arranged for NASA representatives to appear at each of the upcoming RTAWs to describe the program and to work with centers. So if you can attend one of those that is a sure-fire way to be linked with them. Otherwise, you can contact us and give your information as a potential pilot for the national center. We can keep you mind in terms of using you as a pilot to develop the program. But it's basically having NASA representatives come to the center and engage in – with the residents in what's called Imagine Mars.

Katy: Okay.

Male Speaker: But you basically are imaging what a community would be like being developed as a colony on Mars and through that program is

developed to have residents analyze their own community and the resources around them and to see what's needed and what could be helpful in determining their own lives and strengthening their own lives.

Katy: Okay. Thank you.

Michelle: Thank you, Ms. Wheatley, and thank you all so much. We are really, really pleased that so many of you participated in the technical assistance conference call today. We hope that you walk away from this call with an understanding that HUD is here to help you and excited about the different ways in which we're going to do that. So again, one last time if you want follow-up information on any of the things that we discussed today or if you are in need of additional support, please contact us at 888-312-2743. And if there are any of you that were holding to ask questions and were not able to ask your question, please feel free to call us this afternoon on the toll free information line and we will answer your questions.

Again, we thank you all for participating this afternoon. We look forward to seeing you at the regional technical assistance workshops and working with you throughout the year. Have a wonderful afternoon.

Operator: This concludes today's conference call. You may now disconnect.